

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 26, 2022

The Honorable Christopher Wray
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Dear Director Wray:

We are writing to request information regarding the screening and vetting of individuals evacuated from Afghanistan through Operation Allies Refuge and those resettled in the United States under Operation Allies Welcome.

On February 15, 2022, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Defense (DOD) released a report entitled, *Evaluation of the Screening of Displaced Persons from Afghanistan*.¹ The report revealed that Afghan evacuees were not vetted against all available DOD tactical data prior to being paroled into the United States by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).² Use of DOD's tactical database would help to identify known and suspected terrorists prior to evacuees being paroled. We are aware of at least 50 Afghan evacuees paroled by DHS into the United States that were later identified by DOD as having potentially significant security concerns that would not qualify for parole or admission onto U.S. military bases used as temporary housing for evacuees.³ The OIG explains that "significant security concerns" include individuals whose latent fingerprints have been found on improvised explosive devices and known or suspected terrorists.⁴ In addition, at least 28 of these evacuees could not be located once they were flagged by DOD.⁵

On May 4, 2022, DOD officials informed us that they provided the FBI with a spreadsheet containing information on all the Afghan evacuees flagged as potentially significant security concerns. DOD also indicated that, while DHS continues to parole additional Afghans into the United States, DHS is still not using DOD's tactical database to screen Afghans for derogatory information. Since Afghan parolees are no longer being housed on military bases, DOD no longer has a force protection mandate to carry out the additional screening that would better protect our homeland security.

¹ Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, *Evaluation of the Screening of Displaced Persons from Afghanistan* (DODIG-2022-065), February 15, 2022 found at <https://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/article/2938359/evaluation-of-the-screening-of-displaced-persons-from-afghanistan-dodig-2022-065/>

² DOD OIG, p. 9. The term "vetted" is used in the report to describe the process of screening evacuees using biometric data and not typical vetting with in-person interviews that is used for immigration purposes.

³ DOD OIG, p. 10.

⁴ DOD OIG, footnote 19.

⁵ DOD OIG, p. 11.

DHS's failure to use every database to screen for derogatory information has caused a serious breach of homeland security. Accordingly, we request that you provide us with information about those evacuees flagged by DOD and steps the FBI has taken to adjudicate their derogatory information, including locating individuals currently within the United States. In addition, we would like to know how the FBI is addressing the counterterrorism threat posed by Afghan parolees that have not been screened by DHS against the tactical database. Please provide us with this information no later than June 9, 2022. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary



Rob Portman
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs



James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services